

RADICAL HANDBOOK



**English peace activist, Italian union militant:
a common resistance to war and inequality**

INSIDE ● Capitalism and war in the 21st century ● The emerging reality of an international people's liberation movement ● Broad party or united front? ● The left's search for programmatic unity ● How strong is Labour's hold in New Zealand? ● NZ's radical left regroups ● A programme for the future ● The politics of socialism

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Will the barbarians win?

Capitalism & war in the 21st century

Grassroots resistance in Iraq has shaken America's military colonisers.

The Bush administration sacked the first US governor of Iraq just weeks into his job for failing to 'restore order'. Mass protests at US occupation and armed attacks on US troops are frequent events. US helicopter gunships have strafed Baghdad suburbs.

Washington's claim of bringing 'democracy' to Iraq is proving as unreal as the 'weapons of mass destruction' it gave as the reason for declaring war.

Islamic clerics are fronting much of the organised outrage against US occupation, but its energy is coming from a hunger in the Arab street for real social change.



That hunger cannot be satisfied by national liberation alone, but must include democracy, peace and prosperity for all.

After the fall of Baghdad a socialist in Lebanon, Simon Assaf, reported that 'the anti-war movement across the world has been inspirational, and its impact across the Arab world cannot be overestimated'. This movement, he notes, 'is giving hope to ordinary Arabs. People suddenly feel they have allies.'

While warning that the deep hatred of imperialism in the region 'can go in many directions', Assaf says that 'for the first time in 50 years' the Arab left could break from the old belief that the struggle for national liberation means postponing the struggle for real social change. He predicts that, as the global backlash against US aggression grows, 'so can the movement for real change in the Arab world'.

Assaf's comments underline the historic significance of the international movement against capitalism and war. It's a movement that took giant strides forward during the protests against America's invasion of Iraq.

The massive anti-war demonstrations in over 60 countries on February 15 was unique in our planet's history.

Now people everywhere sense that the next war is just around the corner.

NEW LANGUAGE

The extreme militarism of the Bush presidency has given rise to a new language of imperialism like 'war without end', 'pre-emptive strikes' and 'full spectrum domination'.

Today the Pentagon's budget is greater than the military spending of the next ten countries put together.

When a missile-toting George Dubya swaggers on the world stage and stares down other powers, no-one doubts America's military supremacy or economic clout.

But the US state is on a global military rampage not just because of its strengths, but also because of its weaknesses.

This is reflected in the US National Security Strategy, which is a blueprint for imposing an 'American world order' on all of humanity. It was presented to Congress in September 2002 under cover of 'war on terrorism'.

Long before Bush became president, however, the strategy's general outlines had been laid down by an influential faction of the US ruling class centred around the ultra-right think tank Project for the New American Century.

Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz and other members of this think tank are now senior hawks in the Bush administration.

So the strategy's popular label, the 'Bush doctrine', can be misleading.

The National Security Strategy instructs all other countries to follow the American 'free enterprise' model.

Declaring free trade to be a 'moral principle' and a measure of 'real freedom', it insists: 'Policies that further strengthen market incentives and market institutions are relevant for all countries – industrialised countries, emerging markets and the developing world.'

Alongside such moralising about markets equalling freedom, the strategy spells out what's really new in the 'Bush doctrine': America's willingness to use military force as an early policy option rather than as an 'end game'.

It says the US state will use 'the option of pre-emptive actions to counter a sufficient threat to our national strategy'.

This threat is repeated: 'To forestall or prevent such hostile actions by our adversaries, the US will, if necessary, act pre-emptively.'

And who might these 'adversaries' be? Apart from the usual talk about 'terrorists', the strategy warns: 'We are attentive to the

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Peace activist in South Korea opposes the evil empire of George Dubya

► possible renewal of old patterns of great power competition.'

China is slammed for 'pursuing advanced military capabilities that can threaten its neighbours'.

'Great concern' is expressed at Russia's 'uneven commitment to the basic values of free market democracy'.

And America will 'ensure' that European 'allies' continue to 'work with Nato' – meaning the European Union must not build an independent and unified armed force, but instead remain under US leadership through the agency of the Nato political-military pact.

'American military strength' must always be 'beyond challenge', says the strategy, in order to 'dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build-up in hopes of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the US'.

Therefore 'US nuclear superiority' must be retained as 'an essential element in preserving American leadership' in the world. This will give the US state the 'capability to deter possible hostile coalitions of nuclear powers'.

This chilling government strategy paper outlines the realities of world capitalism.

It shows the mutual dependency of the supposedly 'free' market and the US military, the most destructive force on the planet.

It shows that 'allies' like America and the European Union are well aware of the fragility of their alliances and the permanence of their rivalries.

And it shows the US state is so worried about competitors that it will now 'shoot first' at any imperialist rival threatening its global dominance.

ECONOMIC RIVALS

'It's the economy, stupid,' former US president Bill Clinton famously observed. The geopolitical power of each national ruling class is closely connected with its economic strength.

The US economy is under siege from the economies of rival states. Feeling threatened, America's rulers are relying more and more on their one competitive edge: US military muscle.

That's why the US state has got more trigger happy.

America's share of world production, which peaked at 50% in 1950, has fallen to half that today despite a boom in the 1990s.

Since China's rulers embraced market Stalinism in the 1980s, its growth rates have far outstripped those in the US. The Chinese economy looks likely to be bigger than America's within 20 years.

Paul Wolfowitz, now US deputy secretary of defence, in 1997 likened China to the 'outsider' threat posed by Germany before the First World War.

Output rates per hour in Germany, France and Italy were

higher than in America in 2001, says the International Monetary Fund. The European Union's economy now equals America's.

As huge deficits and shaky markets send tremors through the American economy, US policymakers are afraid the dollar will be pushed aside by the euro.

Changes in economic fortunes underlie heated disputes between Washington and other big powers over issues as diverse as global warming, the European army, America's missile shield, the International Criminal Court, trade relations, the United Nations, genetic engineering and the Iraq war.

CHALLENGES

Such challenges to the 'American world order' are to be met by wars like those in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The US state has grabbed monopoly control of Iraq's vast oil reserves, as well as getting access to Central Asia's energy sources and pipeline routes across Afghanistan. Washington has boosted its leverage over other powers dependent on imported oil.

The massive expansion of US influence in the Middle East reduces the threat of Opec states switching their oil trades from dollar to euro. This reinforces the greenback as the world currency and underpins America's financial chokehold.

Unleashing a stunning display of high-tech 'shock and awe' military firepower warns potential rivals like China, Russia and the European Union not to challenge US global domination. It therefore extends the geopolitical reach of America's rulers.

A string of new military bases across Eurasia means the US state can now surround China as well as pushing Russia back. The strategic balance of power is tilted more in America's favour.

For a while US military supremacy may bolster the position of America's rulers. But they cannot forever survive economic trends which favour rival states.

High-tech wars depend at least as much on a home economy as a military force.

Challenges to the 'American world order' by rising imperialist powers, such as China and the European Union, are as certain as the sun rising.

Looming closer is the prospect of major wars between big powers, as well as more wars by big powers on weak states. It's the same imperialist scenario that produced the two world wars and the Cold War.

Even Helen Clark, despite lining Labour up behind the US 'war on terrorism', has openly speculated whether 'a Franco-German-Russia linkup' in loose alliance with China could be forming 'against' the Anglo-American bloc.

The world is becoming a far more dangerous place. There hasn't been any 'peace dividend' from the end of the Cold





War.

Washington justified its attacks on Iraq, Serbia and Afghanistan in the name of 'democracy', yet the dictators of all three countries had earlier been helped by the US state to wage their wars.

The world's top three defence corporations are all American: Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Raytheon. Together they grabbed \$90 billion for arms production in 2000, triple the yearly cost of basic food and healthcare for everyone on the planet.

Washington is funding work on a missile shield to give America first strike nuclear capability for the first time in half a century. The Pentagon is drafting new plans for nuclear strikes against China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and other countries.

Public opinion is being prepared for more US wars by White House claims that Iran and Syria are 'harbouring terrorists' and Washington's expulsion of Cuban diplomats on spying charges.

Bush is pumping money, arms and sometimes troops into right-wing regimes like Colombia, Israel and Indonesia which are killing thousands and terrorising millions.

The US state is easily the biggest international terrorist.

The military aggression of America's rulers goes hand-in-hand with their economic aggression.

In the name of 'prosperity for all', corporate globalisation has been forced on a mostly unwilling world. 70% of world trade is controlled by a few thousand multinational corporations.

Leading the charge are imperialism's economic institutions, like the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation, which are dominated by the US state.

The United Nations estimates that poor countries lose \$2.5 billion each day due to unfair trade rules. That's 14 times the amount they get in aid.

The poverty gaps have widened between not only the West and the rest, but also the West's rulers and their working classes.

19,000 children are dying each day in the Third World because of pressures to repay loans to Western banks. At the same time, public services in the West are being downsized, commercialised and privatised because of 'lack of money'.

Now the market's profiteers are promoting GATS, standing for General Agreement on Trade in Services. This is being fronted by the World Trade Organisation.

Under GATS, public services like health, education and water can be opened up to market forces during 'successive rounds of negotiations'. GATS is a corporate war on grassroots people backed by Washington and other powerful states.

HYPOCRISY

The US state's drive to 'free up' world trade reeks of hypocrisy and power politics.

Robert Wade, professor of political economy at the London School of Economics, says until the Second World War the White House had 'used forms of trade protection to encourage firms and industries based in the US, and became a champion of free trade only once its firms and industries would be sure to win'.

In defiance of World Trade Organisation rules, Washington has recently slapped tariffs and quotas on imported steel, meat, bananas and other products to protect the interests of US big business.

Power politics and military aggression are interwoven with corporate globalisation to advance the interests of the US ruling class. The 'hidden hand' of the market demands the armed fist of the state.

This is seen in Washington's rejection of free trade with New Zealand. US officials said bluntly that, because NZ troops didn't join the invasion of Iraq, the 'political' and 'security' components of a free trade deal weren't met.

America's rulers can only chase their imperial dream of 'full

spectrum' world domination by the method of armed globalisation.

There's a tight bond between the military muscle of every capitalist state and the economic power of its 'home' corporations.

The unity of guns and capital is at the heart of imperialist competition between rival ruling classes. It's not a new thing. Modern imperialism has been around for over a century.

Summing up his 33 years as an officer in the US Marine Corps during the early years of last century, major-general Smedley Butler declared: 'I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street, and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism.'

He spoke of helping make Mexico safe 'for American oil interests in 1914' and Honduras 'right for American fruit companies' in 1903 and purifying Nicaragua 'for the international banking house of Brown Brothers' during 1909-12 and 'in China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested'.

The nature of imperialism is the same today as it was when Butler acted as a Marine Corps enforcer for America's rulers.

This is made clear by the Bush administration's increasing reliance on military firepower as an aid to market forces in their campaign to smash all challenges to America's world supremacy.

Imperialism takes the logic of capitalist competition to an extreme.

Capitalism's lust for profits and power severely restricts the economic and political rights of most people on our planet.

Workers are excluded from any ownership stake in the economy. They are forced into the role of wage slaves with constant money worries, often sliding into poverty.

During the 1990s boom in America, the richest country in the world, a new term was coined for a whole layer of workers: 'the

working poor'.

Even when workers are able to vote for a government, they are excluded from any real political control over the state. The police, military and bureaucracy act as an alien power dictating what workers must do.

When Italian police killed Carlo Giuliani on Genoa's anti-capitalist mobilisation in July 2001, it showed the state's readiness to enforce the will of the bosses even in a parliamentary democracy.

Such economic and political discrimination is a daily reality from America to Zimbabwe and all places in-between.

There are, of course, varying degrees of ruling class domination. It's better to live somewhere you can vote for a government and have space for public debate and dissent, rather than in an outright dictatorship.

But authoritarian regimes like Stalinist China and parliamentary democracies like New Zealand have something in common. In both, grassroots people are stopped from controlling their own lives by their rulers' monopoly on the main levers of power: the economy and the state.

Capitalism's existence hinges on each ruling class keeping their monopoly of power. But the extremes of global competition between rival ruling classes undermine the longterm sustainability of capitalism.

The US state's bloody crusade for world domination poses this historic choice: Will the planet be doomed to a new Age of Barbarism? Or will people at the bottom rise up to abolish capitalism and war?

World capitalism cannot cure itself of global warfare, lack of democracy, poverty amid plenty, poisonous racism and ecological ruin. Such cancers grow out of the inner workings of the system itself.

Only an international people's liberation movement can open the door to human progress.

Whether humanity or barbarism is the victor depends on the strength of the grassroots movement.

Emerging reality of an international people's liberation movement



Peace strike by English secondary school students

The prospect of an international people's liberation movement isn't a socialist dream. It's an emerging reality.

On all continents, diverse political currents, grassroots coalitions and workers' unions are taking up the struggle against armed globalisation.

They are working together as never before despite tensions which revolve around the old problem of reform or revolution.

Tens of millions around the world marched against the US invasion of Iraq. Never before has the planet seen such a united mobilisation.

The anti-war cause has fused with the anti-capitalist mood born at Seattle's mass protests against the World Trade Organisation in December 1999.

The 2003 World Social Forum at Porto Alegre, Brazil, saw 100,000 participants bound together by a common hatred of imperialism.

A world movement is rising which promotes mass democracy, peaceful co-operation and grassroots solidarity.

British socialist Alex Callinicos calls it 'one of the most remarkable mass movements in world history'.

Even an influential capitalist paper, the *New York Times*, said the anti-war movement shows there's not one superpower in the world, but two – 'the US and world public opinion'.

The main currents within this world movement want reform, rather than revolution. In the wake of George Dubya's 'war on terrorism', however, a general leftwards shift can be seen.

The broad opposition to capitalism and war promoted by the likes of Italy's Social Forums is gaining ground in contrast to the narrower focus on capitalism's economic structures promoted by the likes of AT-

OUR DUTY IS CLEAR

In today's world of sharpening imperialist rivalries, the smallest signs of independence by America's weaker allies are slapped down hard.

The NZ prime minister found this out the hard way. Helen Clark was forced into a humiliating apology for an indirect criticism of George Dubya's Iraq war, and then her government was snubbed by the US in trade talks.

Now Clark is trying to brown-nose her way back into Washington's good books by sending NZ military forces to Iraq for 'reconstruction' purposes.

NZ taxes that should go into social services are instead subsidising US aggression. This helps the US state tighten its colonial grip on Iraq in the face of indigenous protests.

Signing New Zealand up as a US stooge will only make George Dubya even more of a mad dog. It will encourage him to attack more countries and pour more billions into high-tech weapons that threaten the planet.

Washington is half a hemisphere away. But we can put direct pressure on NZ politicians backing US aggression.

The duty of everyone in New Zealand who wants peace is clear:

- Demand the recall of all NZ military forces from US areas of operation.
- Tell Helen Clark to drop her support for the US 'war on terrorism'.
- Drown out right-wing politicians wanting to reverse NZ's nuclear-free policy.
- Use mass actions to pile on the pressure. March. Picket. Strike.

TAC France.

A recent New Zealand example of this global trend is the dramatic shift by the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa from exclusively 'economic manifestations' of world capitalism to making the 'links between the anti-globalisation and anti-war movements' (to quote CAFCA organiser Murray Horton).

Intertwined with the international growth of left radicalism is an upturn in workers' actions.

'What we are all mobilising about in this period is the right to decide your own destiny,' declared the Bologna secretary of Italy's FIOM engineering union, Maurizio Landini, shortly after Genoa's 300,000-strong anti-capitalist march in July 2001.

During recent general strikes in Spain and Italy, millions of unionists linked anti-war slogans with economic demands on their governments.

A sticker popular with Italian workers read: 'The only general we like is called strike.'

France, Germany, Britain and other capitalist powers have lately been the site of big strikes with a radical tinge.

All this is blowing away much of the gloomy mood among workers after a long era of defeats.

Workers' confidence is on the rise in many countries. Sometimes this results in the election of politicians seen as left radicals, like the leaders of Venezuela and Brazil.

A coming together of unionists and radicals on a mass scale took place at Seattle in December 1999. It spawned the famous description 'Teamster-Turtle alliance'.

This wasn't an accident. It was the start of a global trend. Between Seattle and 9/11, workers were central to vast anti-capitalist mobilisations in Argentina, Ecuador, Austria, France, Nigeria, Colombia, Honduras, Brazil, Canada, Italy and elsewhere.

Then came the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers, soon followed by the US attack on Afghanistan as the opening salvo of Bush's 'war on terrorism'.

As America's rulers whipped up a tidal wave of war hysteria and moral outrage, some courageous voices on the left defined



'Unless you also target the structures of military and political power that are responsible for US domination, you won't get far in your anti-corporate struggles.'

■ Filipino activist Walden Bello's advice to other left radicals

9/11 as 'blowback' for US state terrorism.

But lots of US activists on both sides of the 'Teamster-Turtle alliance' were thrown off balance. The response by organisers of an anti-capitalist mobilisation in Washington was to call it off, bringing sighs of relief from reformist union officials.

By the time of the Iraq war, however, many tens of thousands were protesting in America's streets against their own government.

Popular US placards labelled Bush a 'war criminal' and 'the world's worst terrorist'.

While only five major national unions and three state labour federations in America publicly opposed the Iraq war, the activist coalition Labor Against War won the support of many scores of union locals and labour councils.

US rank-and-filers were far readier to take a stand against war than their top union officials.

Outside America, most anti-capitalists swung into lively anti-war activities as soon as the White House targeted Afghanistan.

Some leftists have described the shift from anti-capitalism to anti-imperialism as 'seamless'. That understates problems in certain countries.

In France, for instance, reluctance by ATTAC and the French Communist Party to move beyond 'economist' criticisms of capitalism retarded the creation of a mass anti-war movement.

But the positives heavily outweigh the negatives. As the US state moved to invade Iraq, most countries saw the biggest peace

marches since the Vietnam War, the last era of global revolt against imperialism.

The moral authority of all champions of 'American-style freedom' was called into question by huge mobilisations enjoying wide public sympathy.

This was a dagger at the heart of capitalism's rulers. Their dominance depends not only on their control of the economy and state, but also their ability to persuade a majority of society to bow to their moral authority.

Central to the social impact of this world movement has been organised labour.

200 unions on five continents representing 130 million workers signed a joint pledge to organise against the Iraq war. This international union solidarity wasn't just words.

The main Greek union centre called a general strike at the outbreak of war.

Italy's three union federations also organised a general strike, and there were hundreds of other actions by jobsites and unions.

Construction workers in Australia downed tools because 'our troops are overseas slaughtering women and kids' (to quote Kevin Reynolds of UnionsWA).

Dockworkers in Canada voted to halt military supplies headed to the Gulf.

Thousands of Irish workers walked out to join anti-war protests.

There were important workers' protests in Argentina, Pakistan, Spain, Germany, India and dozens of other countries.

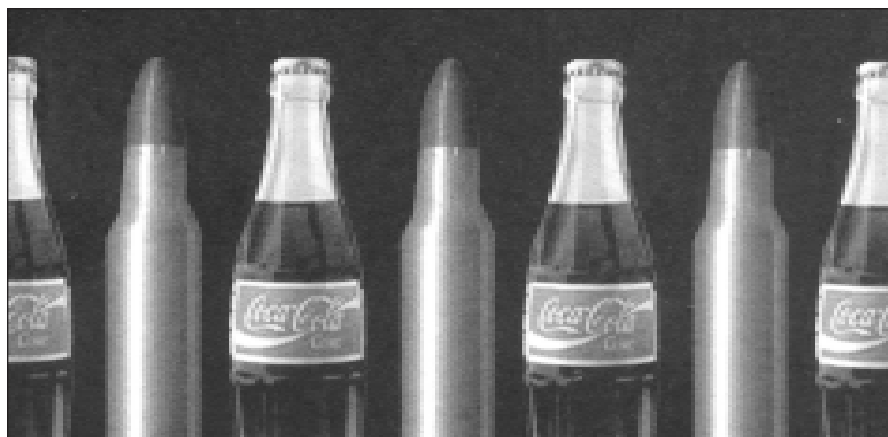
Left activists in Europe are giving a lead in how to build an international campaign against capitalism and war.

There were 60,000 participants at the founding of the European Social Forum (ESF) at Florence, Italy, in November 2002.

The Italian coordination group said the ESF provides a broad umbrella for everyone who is 'against neo-liberal policies', 'against the war' and 'for new and broader universal rights'.

Significantly, the European Trade Union Confederation took part in the ESF, as did most Italian unions.

British socialist Chris Nineham reported that the ESF speakers who got most applause were 'the ones who made the links





between globalisation and war, between the struggle in Palestine and the US attack on Iraq, between neo-liberalism and racist policies on migration’.

Noting that ‘revolution was in the air’ at Florence, Ninehan said: ‘Against the background of environmental destruction, the commodification of every area of life and the drive to war, radical solutions made sense.’

Two of the world’s biggest movements against the Iraq war were in European countries with pro-war governments, England and Italy. But their outcomes were very different.

England’s Stop the War Coalition had an activist core of 25,000 leftists, Muslims and peaceniks.

This broad united front, started by the Socialist Workers Party, mobilised two million marchers on February 15 and sparked mass walkouts by high school students.

The scale and militancy of the protests put Labour MPs under such pressure that, at one point, Tony Blair told insiders he was likely to be rolled as prime minister. But too many of the Labour MPs buckled at the wire, Blair was saved, and so British troops went into Iraq.

The missing element in England was organised labour.

Top leaders of five big unions took a stand against Blair, and many union branches supported the anti-war coalition.

But the TUC union centre was so hostile they refused to provide a speaker for the big protest on February 15. So Blair’s government didn’t have to fear a centralised strike wave.

In Italy, however, the large peace movement had won the backing of the three union centres. They called out all workers for a two hours’ general strike when the war began.

Countless other anti-war strikes also broke out around the country.

The peace movement had built direct links with key sections of workers in engineering plants, public services and car factories. Their unions staged the longest and biggest strikes.

Despite Berlusconi’s fanatical pro-war propaganda, the Italian premier was too scared of organised labour to send his troops into Iraq.

The contrast between Italy and England shows that governments are well aware of organised labour’s potential power.

When workers across different sectors stop making and moving the goods and services that provide the ruling class with profits, the economic source of its power, capitalism spins into crisis.

Any centralised strike becomes a huge political challenge to the ruling class. That’s what Berlusconi feared in Italy and Blair didn’t in England.

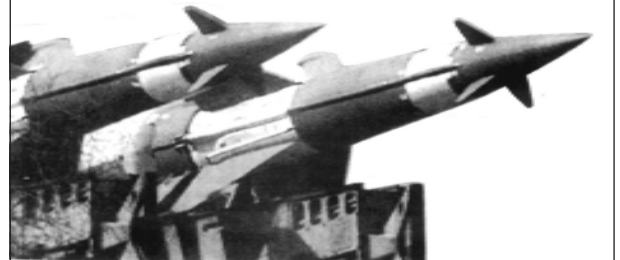
The lesson is clear: Link radical movements with organised labour and you’ve got a serious challenge to the system.

‘Capitalist world hierarchy’

The chair of England’s Stop the War Coalition, Andrew Murray, says this about the ‘Bush doctrine’:

It is an attempt to utilise the one area in which US relative power has not been eroded – military might – to reorder a capitalist world hierarchy with the US permanently at the top, Britain at its right hand, and the other big powers each enjoying their Washington-allotted place in the sun, content to share in the feast of the world’s resources at the expense of the world’s poor, and with never a thought of challenging the ultimate authority of the one superpower.

However, it is a castle built on shifting sands. Already the attempts to impose the ‘Bush doctrine’ have raised international tensions to a post-war peak. Already other powers are chafing against their subordinate position.



The Palestinian intifada has inspired grassroots activists everywhere

Broad party or united front?

Debate between Scottish Socialist Party and Socialist Workers Party

Central to the global movement against capitalism and war are parties of the far left. For years they had been divided into different currents that stood off from each other.

So it's significant that Conferences of the European Anti-Capitalist Left, which meet twice a year, now group parties on the far left of the movement.

Included are the 'big four' of Europe: Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire of France, Socialist Workers Party of England and Wales, Partito della Rifondazione Comunista of Italy and the Scottish Socialist Party.

This regroupment won't just help the far left work together. It will also clarify their disputes, which mainly centre around the revolutionary approach to reformism: How deep is the crisis of reformism? Have reformist parties become totally capitalist? How should revolutionaries interact with reformists?

The answers given will reflect the different conditions in each country as filtered through the political lens of each party.

There is, for instance, a key debate between the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) over the nature of the British Labour Party and how to relate to reformists.

'Social Democratic or Labour parties in the developed world,' says Nick McKerrrell of the SSP, 'have become openly capitalist parties. Although many working people still passively support these parties, this is much more fluid than it was in the early 20th century, and that support can transfer to other political forces.'

The SSP's founders felt 'what was needed was a unified socialist party that would fill the void created by the transformation of Labour into a party of big business'.

While McKerrrell says this strategy doesn't exclude participating in united fronts with reformists 'where necessary', he stresses that 'the main task has been the building and strengthening of the SSP across the whole of Scotland'.

According to McKerrrell, 'the transformation of the reformist Labour parties into openly capitalist organisations has meant the role of Marxists has changed'.

The role of Marxists today, he says, 'is to form new unified pluralist socialist parties which will act as a beacon to the working class and youth politicised by the anti-globalisation movement'.

McKerrrell's views have to be looked at seriously in light of the recent election of six SSP members to the Scottish Parliament. The party did so well because of its opposition to the Iraq war, support for the firefighters' strike and plans for a war against poverty.

John Rees of the SWP says the adoption of 'the neo-liberal economic and social agenda' by the British Labour Party's leadership has 'hugely diminished' its policy differences with the Conservatives.

This explains the 'massive disparity' between Labour's leaders and the wishes of many, perhaps most, workers.

But that doesn't mean Labour has ceased to be a reformist party, notes Rees.

'All parties are defined not only by their policies but also by their class composition. This is especially true of reformist parties, since they have always been organisations composed of workers but with policies and leaderships wedded to the continued existence of the capitalist system.'

While this contradiction has been 'pushed to extremes' by Blair's pro-market, pro-war government, says Rees, 'it has not yet been broken'. Most of Labour's members and voters are working class, and the unions remain tied to the party.

So how revolutionaries relate to reformists is 'absolutely

crucial'.

Just because workers agree with socialists on particular issues like war, racism or privatisation doesn't make them socialists, so it's wrong to bundle all these issues together in one socialist party.

'Uneven consciousness in the working class movement means that it is simply counterproductive to turn our backs on the united front approach,' insists Rees.

The immediate aim of the united front between reformists and revolutionaries is to 'maximise the unity of the working class in struggle'.

But another benefit is the chance to debate wider differences without the pressures of party discipline.

'The broad party model forces unity where there is principled difference between reform and revolution', says Rees, 'and breeds schism by insisting on party primacy where there should be common action in the united front'.

Genuine unity in action depends on 'separation on matters of principle such as reform and revolution'.

So the SWP is involved in the Socialist Alliance, 'a united front of a special type', which stands in elections on a programme that is 'the minimum acceptable to the revolutionaries and the maximum acceptable to the former Labour Party members'.

At the same time, both reformists and revolutionaries in the Socialist Alliance retain their 'independence of action' in disputes over principles.

By acting as if 'the distinction between reform and revolution is no longer operative in modern politics', a broad socialist party ignores the basic nature of capitalism. The capitalist state and the ruling class will resist 'popular pressure' by all sorts of undemocratic and violent acts.

That's why revolutionaries insist socialism is only possible by a 'complete overthrow' of the system.

There are many different levels of political awareness within the working class, notes Rees.

The best way for the minority of workers with a high level of political consciousness to relate to the rest of the labour movement is 'for them to assemble in a separate organisation that can then influence others by the clarity of its analysis and the coherence of its actions'.

If the more and the less politically conscious coexist in the same party, then 'theoretical confusion and practical paralysis result'.

This debate between the SSP and SWP over reform and revolution isn't just something that concerns socialists. It has a flow-on for all left activists.

That's because the diversity of the world movement produces many tensions which, in one way or another, revolve around the old problem of reform or revolution.

The rise of this world movement allows more scope to measure political theories against the test of practice.

The SSP's electoral success, for instance, shows a positive grassroots response to socialists campaigning together on a broad left programme.

However, it's far from clear that a broad left programme has to be the property of a centralised party rather than a united front, such as the Socialist Alliance in England.

The Socialist Alliance, in which the SWP is a key player, has also been lifted up by a surge of support in recent local body elections. A Lancashire ward held by Labour was won by the Socialist Alliance.

And there's no doubt that the SWP's united front approach to building an anti-war movement was far more successful than the SSP's centralised party approach.





Spanish protesters take to the streets against Bush

The left's search for programmatic unity

Socialists of all types share the belief that mass democratic planning to meet the needs of all people and our planet is the only realistic alternative to capitalist planning to boost the profits and power of ruling elites.

As yet we are far from socialism. But capitalism's drive towards market extremism and global war is being confronted by the emergence of an international people's liberation movement.

This movement was born in the fight for grassroots alternatives to the everyday injustices and barbarities of capitalism.

As it grows stronger, the movement is faced with the task of turning a general wish for universal freedom, prosperity and peace into a common programme of action.

If the existing millions of left activists were to promote a common programme, they would accelerate the mobilisation of the other billions on the planet who are needed to change the system.

Yet this political key to social change runs up against the old problem: How can differing shades of reformists and revolutionaries agree on a common programme?

The answer is starting to be thrown up by the evolution of the global conflict between humanity and barbarity.

The intensity of capitalist competition has reached such fever pitch that even the mildest of reformists come into conflict with corporate globalisation and imperialist war.

So the basis for common action among reformists and revolutionaries is increasing. There is expanding consensus on the immediate reforms that must be won to stop capitalism from devastating humanity and our planet.

But winning these reforms will demand the sort of mass struggles which undermine capitalism as a system.

Existing coalitions around the world are fighting for reforms which the long-dead Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky would have called 'transitional demands'.

Such reforms, said Trotsky, spring from the urgent needs facing grassroots people, but winning them must cripple capitalism's ability to keep going.

Because mobilising around these re-

forms creates the transitional steps between reform and revolution, united fronts of reformists and revolutionaries can form around them.

Alex Callinicos says building united fronts around transitional demands are not only vital to winning them, but would also start 'to introduce a different social logic'.

Callinicos is a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in England and Wales. He has published a 'transitional programme' that brings together important demands already being raised by existing coalitions.

This, he stresses, is 'intended more in the spirit of discussion than as a finished programme'. His eleven points are:

- Cancel Third World debt.
- Introduce a tax on international currency transactions.
- Restore capital controls.
- Introduce a universal basic income.
- Reduce the working week.
- Defend public services and renationalise privatised industries.
- Progressive taxation to fund public services and redistribute wealth.
- Abolish immigration controls and extend citizenship rights.
- Stop environmental catastrophe.
- Dissolve the military-industrial complex.
- Defend civil liberties.

Callinicos says his transitional programme can only be won 'through mass struggles' in which organised labour plays a 'central role'.

A country's movement that won even part of such a programme would be faced with a dilemma, he notes.

A wounded system would respond by economic sabotage, such as capital flight, currency devaluation and runaway inflation.

Then the movement had two choices: It could retreat at the price of losing the reforms it had won. Or the movement could press ahead despite capitalism turning to force to destroy it.

'To press ahead would be, in effect, to undertake a revolution,' Callinicos states.

A movement that decided to overcome the resistance of capital 'could only succeed by winning the active support of the

majority of the population', particularly of organised labour, and 'by appealing to the solidarity of like-minded movements around the world'.

The revolutionary project is 'an awesome task, particularly given the destructive power that the lords of capital now command', Callinicos freely admits.

'It is, however, the path on which the anti-capitalist movement has embarked – not as a result of a conscious strategy but through the logic of the struggles in which it is engaged.'

The alternative is to abandon hope of even partial reform of the present system.

Despite all the risks and costs involved in the revolutionary project, he concludes, it seems 'the only option open' to anyone opposing the injustice, suffering and destruction which capitalism is inflicting on the world.

A transitional programme similar to what Callinicos suggests wouldn't be an abstract thing. It would be real because all its separate demands have already sprung from mass struggles around the globe.

What's new is bringing these demands together into one broad political platform around which reformists and revolutionaries could form a united front.

Single issue united fronts are still vital to mobilise as many people as possible around an important struggle, such as opposing US wars.

However, the addition of a broad left united front would be a big step forward.

Already underway is a global process of left regroupment. There is a search for maximum unity among reformists and revolutionaries while allowing the open expression of important differences.

An example from Europe is the Italian Social Forums. A local one is Global Peace & Justice Auckland.

Forming a united front around a transitional programme would make the regroupment process more politically defined and structurally sound.

Such a broad left united front could attract many of the grassroots people who want a broad-based alternative to pro-market Labour politicians.

Grassroots trends in New Zealand

How strong is the Labour Party's hold?

As the US war machine prepared to invade Iraq, the biggest peace marches since the Vietnam War took place in Auckland, Tauranga, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

Probably 30,000 joined in around New Zealand, including a high ratio of young people.

Left activists who connected the dots between Bush's war and world capitalism were embraced by the movement.

The anti-war movement has thrown up permanent broad left coalitions in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. These 'peace & justice' forums reflect growing opposition to capitalism and war.

However, the more radical mood flowing from anti-war protests hasn't ended Labour Party domination of the political landscape.

Opinion polls uncovered the coexistence of two contrary trends: A big majority oppose US aggression. And Helen Clark's government retains huge working class support despite backing the US 'war on terrorism' (although not the invasion of Iraq itself).

Senior union officials in several cities told anti-war activists to tone down their criticisms of Labour if they wanted to get union backing.

It seems logical to assume these officials fear that Labour's working class support is not as stable as it looks. And they have good reason for such a fear.

Labour's policies are depressingly similar to National's in so many areas:

- Public services are being starved of cash at a time of record budget surpluses.

- The legal ban on political and solidarity strikes cripples the union movement.
- Sending NZ military forces to the 'war on terrorism' fosters US aggression.
- Civil liberties are eroded by the expansion of secret police powers to 'fight terrorism'.
- The restrictions on migrant rights can only benefit racist politicians and threaten all minorities.
- Allowing corporate 'partnerships' with the public sector opens the way to private control of roads and water.
- The open release of GE crops will endanger the environment.
- Support for global 'free trade' threatens the jobs and pay of NZ workers.

Labour's leaders do distance themselves from National on some issues.

So finance minister Michael Cullen holds out the hope of budget surpluses being used in future years to bolster public services.

The prime minister distanced her government from the Iraq war at the same time as backing every other act of US aggression.

Cabinet ministers continue settlement talks with Maori treaty claimants while retreating from Labour's old 'close the gaps' policy.

It's not hard for Labour to show a kinder face to grassroots people than National does. National and its right-wing cronies Act and NZ First are so far up the bum of business that only their toes are sticking out.

But Labour's policy differences with

National are minor compared to their shared values.

Both the big parties believe in alliances with imperialist powers, state sponsorship of corporate globalisation, business control of the economy and workers' inferior social position.

Labour has shifted a long way rightwards over the years.

Half a century ago the party talked about 'democratic socialism'. Even 20 years ago Labour posed as the defender of the 'welfare state'.

Now its upper ranks are stuffed with 'high flyers' and you seldom hear any Labour politician identify their party with the working class.

Even so, Labour's support base continues to be its union sponsors and working class voters.

Recent union struggles, however, reveal a gap between political Labour and organised labour.

Probably the most pro-Labour union in the country, the Engineers, dug in at Kinleith mill for an 88-day strike that became a test of strength with the bosses.

Firefighters who led strop-pickets to enforce a 'closed shop' face a law suit that claims their actions are illegal under Labour's Employment Relations Act.

Public nurses are campaigning to claw back a national award and force Labour to inject more cash into health.

Despite the gap between Labour and workers, the government is strongly backed by leaders of the Council of Trade Unions and its affiliates.

Most union officials don't want workers to raise 'political' issues like the Iraq war which might upset Labour.

These officials both shape and reflect the opinions of rank-and-file unionists, who cannot see any clear alternative to Labour.

Workers' confidence took a king hit during the depressing years of Labour's Rogernomics betrayals (1984-90) and National's union bashing (1990-99).

Viewed from this low point, we can see a definite lift in workers' confidence.

The number of disputes with employers is growing. There's a spread of job delegate networks. Union numbers have risen more than 10% over the past three years.

But the increase in union membership slowed to just over 1% in the twelve months to last December, less than natural workforce growth.

This disturbing figure, along with Labour's continuing domination of the political scene, indicate only a partial recovery of workers' confidence in their own organised strength.

The trend is upwards, but there's still a long way to go before New Zealand's working class breaks Labour's hold and launches a general offensive against the bosses.



10,000-strong Auckland march against Iraq war



Wellington march to US embassy

NZ's radical left regroupings

Three core approaches: narrow party, broad party, united front

Stronger radical currents flowing among the world's workers and youth are remaking the shape of politics in many nations.

Already the New Zealand left has begun to regroup even though the process of radicalisation is only just starting in this country.

Actual changes in the radical left reveal three core approaches to left regroupment in New Zealand: narrow party, broad party, united front. Let's look at each in turn.

NARROW PARTY

At the front of the narrow party approach is the Anti-Capitalist Alliance, formed in 2002 from a fusion of the Workers Party (mostly Auckland) and Revolution (mostly Christchurch).

The ACA is a mixed bag of old-style Stalinists and 'postmodern' academic Marxists.

What unites them is the wildly optimistic view that the Labour Party is close to irrelevant because today there's no 'material base' for reformism in New Zealand.

In their opinion, conditions are already ripe for a revolutionary party to directly win masses of workers away from Labour.

The pitiful votes cast for the ACA in the last election exposes the delusional nature of their project.

The ACA's view that Labour is almost past history isolates them from the mainstream of workers who still support Labour.

Even the minority of workers losing faith in Labour won't be attracted to a small group so obviously out of tune with political realities.

This is what makes the ACA a sectarian project, rather than the childish insults that its leaders routinely hurl against other leftists.

A minority of ACA supporters took part in anti-war united fronts, several with commitment, the others on a 'raid' for potential members.

But mostly the ACA stayed apart from the broad left coalitions building for New Zealand's biggest peace marches in 30 years.

Because the ACA's strategy is the narrow one of 'build the party', it downplays the key role of united fronts between reformists and revolutionaries.

Another example of a narrow party approach is the call for the creation of a 'Socialist Alliance' coming from the Auckland-based Communist Workers Group.

Says the CWG: 'The whole point of an alliance of socialists is to unite the revolutionary left into a high level United Front as the basis for building a mass revolutionary workers party.'

It's misleading for the CWG to claim that its bid to 'unite the

revolutionary left' constitutes a 'united front'.

By definition, a united front brings together reformists and revolutionaries. The CWG's clear aim, however, is to build a 'revolutionary' party which would exclude reformists.

During the Iraq war, the CWG favoured a small group called Direct Anti-War Action over Auckland's broad left coalition Global Peace & Justice, which got 10,000 to one march.

The CWG are not committed to serious coalition building with reformists. So their call for a 'revolutionary' Socialist Alliance indicates a narrow party approach.

BROAD PARTY

Advocates of a broad left party mostly belong to the Greens and the Alliance. Within both parties are strong trends pushing for left regroupment.

The Greens, with a membership of 4,000 and eight MPs, are easily the closest to being a 'mass party' to the left of Labour.

They have gone up for two main reasons: The Greens stood for clear principles, like opposition to genetic engineering and corporate globalisation. And their party was highly visible in grassroots campaigns around these principles.

Before entering parliament, Nandor Tanczos was part of the Wild Greens who ripped up a GE crop in an illegal raid that sparked a mass movement against genetic engineering.

Green MP Sue Bradford was roughed up by cops several years ago in the Melbourne protests against the corporate World Economic Forum.

Keith Locke, the Green MP responsible for foreign affairs, is a prominent campaigner against US war moves.

The Greens embrace everyone from mild reformists to extreme radicals. Their often opposing views breed unresolved differences which turn into distinct party factions.

For instance, while Green MPs voted against sending NZ troops to the US war in Afghanistan, one Green official confided that Keith Locke was 'so far out in left field' that he pretty much does his own thing.

As their politically diverse membership increases, it becomes harder for the Greens to act as a united party.

So the many Greens who worked hard within the anti-war coalitions did so as individual activists, not as party delegates.

The Greens' parliamentary caucus is a 'super faction' floating above a party too factionalised to properly control its MPs.

The eight Green MPs have more influence on party direction



Wellington cops protect US interests

► than the other 4,000 members put together.

Now there's a push from within the Green caucus to form a closer relationship with Labour in government.

Even if Labour ends the moratorium on GE crops, says co-leader Rod Donald, 'if the election outcome meant Labour could only govern with our support on confidence and supply, then we would give them that support'.

The Greens will continue to take the GE-free message out to the public, says co-leader Jeanette Fitzsimons.

But she distances her party from any illegal actions. 'The Green Party isn't advocating or taking part in direct action,' she insists, while noting that 'other groups in the community' will be digging up GE crops.

Taken together, the 'support for Labour' and the 'no direct action' themes draw Green MPs closer to Labour while distancing them from grassroots activists.

It's a regroupment that shifts the Green caucus to the right.

Green MPs are being pulled deeper into the murky business of parliament at the expense of the factors behind their rise: clear principles and activist coalitions.

Their regroupment around Labour will increase reformist pressures on the Greens. Left-wing Greens pushing for radical social change will be sidelined.

By contrast, there's a left push within the Alliance to introduce a 'socialist objective' into the party constitution.

This is a bid to regroup Alliance activists around a 'broad socialist party' strategy.

Within such an Alliance, reformists and socialists would coexist in one centralised party with a reformist election manifesto and a socialist constitutional objective.

The model for this strategy is the 'pluralist' Scottish Socialist Party, which recently won six seats in the Scottish Parliament at the expense of British Labour.

Former Alliance leader Jim Anderton is so close to Labour that he's now Helen Clark's most loyal cabinet minister.

Anderton's breakaway removed the Alliance from parliament in 2002 and slashed their activist base to no more than 200.

The remainder of the Alliance don't want the old Alliance model. This 'inclusive' party of small business owners, ex-National MPs, Maori nationalists, green activists, mild reformists, union militants and socialists was so factionalised that it fell apart.

There's a commitment among Alliance activists to reconnect with the working class.

So the Alliance network is supporting the drive to organise casual, low-paid and unemployed workers into Unite, a 'community union' affiliated to the Council of Trade Unions. The early response of these workers has been positive.

This union drive, led by Alliance president Matt McCarten, doesn't have any open political message.

But Alliance activists realise that organised workers are more likely to stand up against Labour. This is the subtext of the Alliance focus on enrolling the unorganised into Unite.

Socialist Worker is in sympathy with the Alliance's union drive and the bid to write a 'socialist objective' into its party

constitution.

But can these things create the conditions for a serious challenge to Labour? On their own, it's unlikely.

The Scottish Socialist Party traces its origins to a massive grassroots fightback against the Conservatives' poll tax.

Likewise, large sections of NZ workers will only break to the left of Labour through mass struggles which increase their collective confidence and political awareness.

That's why reshaping the Alliance is not the big answer to what sort of left regroupment can mobilise grassroots people.

We need to look towards the wider process of radicalisation that's unfolding in New Zealand. And that takes us into the area of united fronts.

UNITED FRONT

A significant regroupment of the New Zealand left has emerged from the anti-war movement.

Activists from Labour, churches, Greens, Alliance, social movements, campuses, unions, Socialist Worker and elsewhere combined into a permanent broad left forum in Auckland called Global Peace & Justice.

The Wellington and Christchurch anti-war movements are doing likewise.

The three forums have different names. For the sake of convenience, this article will group them under one 'peace & justice' label.

The spread of radicalism in New Zealand finds concrete expression in these peace & justice forums.

Nick, a Wellington leftist, put it this way: 'We need to work from radical terms, rather than terms that are close to the status quo.'

The peace & justice forums are being set up as broad left educational and organising centres.

Opposition to imperialist war and corporate globalisation are the common currency of these united fronts of reformists, radicals and revolutionaries.

While no overseas blueprint was followed, there appear to be similarities with the Italian Social Forums.

The peace & justice forums are a real chance to regroup the radical left into a larger and more powerful force.

But will they last? That largely depends on three interlinked factors: actions, ideas, workers.

Let's look at these factors in more detail.

(1) Actions

Solid organising against the Iraq war tapped into the radicalising mood and brought many thousands into the streets.

It was this wave of anti-imperialism which gave impetus to the peace & justice forums.

Likewise, the peace & justice forums will only progress by organising more mass actions against capitalism and war.

Louise, a Wellington peace activist, insists: 'We need a focus on future actions.'

And there's a general willingness to do so. The agreement to set up a national liaison committee will help to coordinate national actions.

As we all know, the US state and its imperialist rivals are going to stir up more wars.

In between the shooting, world capitalism will continue its permanent war against grassroots people which produces inequality, injustice and inhumanity.

The totality of the system's oppression calls for more than a 'single issue' response by leftists.

The peace & justice forums need a broad programme of action in order to become a serious alternative to the status quo. That brings us onto ideas.

(2) Ideas

Probably the single biggest obstacle to mobilising at the grassroots is the influence of the Labour Party.

In effect, Labour says: 'Politics is parliament's business, just vote for us and we'll look after you.'

Breaking Labour's chokehold needs mass actions which give

workers more confidence about taking on the system.

But that's not enough. Mass actions must be linked to an integrated set of radical ideas which challenge Labour's integrated set of capitalist ideas. So we need a broad programme of action.

Such a programme would integrate the main ideas that flow out of grassroots struggles.

It would be the product of democratic debate among a broad range of leftists.

It would be inclusive enough to embrace both reformists and revolutionaries without demanding they put aside basic differences.

To get discussions going inside peace & justice forums, Socialist Worker is suggesting a seven-point programme:

- Dismantle capitalism's ability to wage war.
- Put controls on the capitalists.
- Improve workers' rights.
- Support the right to self-determination.
- Promote human rights.
- Defend public services.
- Clean up the environment.

(For the full text, see the article 'A programme for the future' over the page.)

Socialist Worker stresses that its programme suggestions are just a starting point for discussions among a broad range of activists, not a 'finished' project.

Just drafting a programme of radical, but far from revolutionary, demands makes it obvious that they will never be conceded by capitalism without a huge fight.

And central to winning that fight is organised labour.

(3) Workers

England and Italy saw two of the world's biggest anti-war movements, but their outcomes were very different.

The English coalition got two million out in the streets. Faced with the hostility of powerful union leaders, however, the movement didn't have the leverage to stop prime minister Tony Blair sending troops to Iraq.

The Italian coalition won the support of the three union centres through its mass links with workers. The result was a flurry of anti-war stoppages, including a general strike. The rabid pro-war premier, Silvio Berlusconi, was too scared of coordinated strikes to take part in the war.

This is a vivid illustration of the key role of organised labour. Capitalism's rulers panic at even the threat of a strike wave which would choke off profits, the lifeblood of their whole system of exploitation.

If peace & justice forums build strong links with workers and their unions, this combination of radical politics and workers' power could transform the political scene in New Zealand.

That's why linking up with workers should be a key focus of peace & justice forums.

Mass actions

**must be linked to an integrated
set of radical ideas which challenge
Labour's integrated set of capitalist ideas.
So we need a broad programme of action.
Such a programme would integrate
the main ideas that flow out of
grassroots struggles.**

The decision of Wellington's peace & justice forum to expose 'the links between militarism and economic exploitation' is a step in the right direction.

Socialist Worker's mass leaflet campaign among workers has two aims: first, take radical ideas out to workers, and second, get them involved in peace & justice forums.

The effect of tens of thousands of socialist leaflets on workers at a time of growing radicalisation can be considerable.

SOCIALIST FOCUS

Left regroupment is being driven by the growth of radicalism in New Zealand. This is an uneven process.

Alongside big anti-war protests and a rise in workers' confidence exists the massive influence of a pro-capitalist Labour Party and the lingering gloom of years of workers' defeats.

The narrow 'revolutionary' approach to left regroupment which downplays or ignores united fronts with reformists is sectarian. It has no appeal to Socialist Worker.

Those in the Alliance who want to add a 'socialist objective' to their party constitution have the sympathy of Socialist Worker. However, a 'pluralist' Alliance would still be too narrow to unite the radical left against capitalism and war.

The emergence of peace & justice forums in the three main cities combines the radical left into a stronger alternative to the status quo.

These united fronts promote broad left unity without pretending there aren't basic differences between reformists and revolutionaries. We need to build them up.

As well as organising more mass actions, peace & justice forums need two other things: a broad left programme and mass links to workers.

This is the focus of Socialist Worker. If you like our focus, join Socialist Worker and help us do it. See our contact details on the back page.



Auckland's Mt Roskill Grammar students stand up for peace

A PROGRAMME FOR THE FUTURE

Socialist Worker is taking a draft programme into peace & justice forums around New Zealand.

Our aim is to advance discussions among activists about a broad programme to unite the broad left against capitalism and war.

Our suggestions are only a starting point for wider debate, not a 'finished' programme.

Socialist Worker leaflets will take our draft programme out to many thousands of workers around the country. Make contact with Socialist Worker if you want to help our leaflet campaign.

Here's the full text of our 7-point draft programme:

(1) DISMANTLE CAPITALISM'S ABILITY TO WAGE WAR

The militarisation of the planet threatens barbaric destruction.

Washington's commitment to a missile defence shield would give the US state first strike nuclear capability for the first time in half a century.

If the resources that states now devote to arms were instead diverted to social needs, all of humanity could enjoy good food, health care, education, housing and other essentials for a decent life.

In addition to opposing Bush's war drive, peace activists around the world need to work towards dismantling capitalism's ability to wage war.

In New Zealand that would include ending the Labour government's support for the US 'war on terrorism', renouncing all military and spy pacts between the NZ and US states, closing US-controlled spy stations (Waihopai and Tangimoana), removing the US military base at Christchurch airport, cutting the NZ military budget and requiring local industries producing the stuff of war to switch to civilian purposes.

We in New Zealand can make a real contribution to world nuclear disarmament by stopping powerful politicians in National and Act from undermining our nuclear-free policy.

(2) PUT CONTROLS ON THE CAPITALISTS

The growing threat of war is closely linked to the growing power of market forces.

US corporates and the Bush administration are working together to create an American world order.

This is meeting an antagonistic response from rival imperialists like the European Union and China.

Armed globalisation is leading towards world war.

Putting controls on the world's capitalists will weaken the economic competition which underpins military rivalry.

It will also start to reimpose political control over financial markets and bring justice to the world's poor.

Demands for a financial transaction tax and the cancellation of Third World debt were central to the rise of a global anti-capitalist movement.

Another key demand is state control over the inflow and outflow of capital so that financiers find it hard to destabilise economies.

In addition to sponsoring specific demands like these, left activists in New Zealand call on the Labour government to renounce its commitment to the 'free market'.

This call should be linked to mass campaigns, like opposing Labour's 'partnership' deals with corporates around motorway construction.

(3) IMPROVE WORKERS' RIGHTS

Capitalism's power flows from its control over workers who collectively produce goods and services needed by society.

Helen Clark's government has continued National's legal ban on political and solidarity strikes. This kneecapping of the union movement is a disgraceful act from a party leadership calling themselves 'Labour'.

Workers cannot legally stand up for their human rights until they regain the freedom to strike.

Other improvements in workers' rights are long overdue in New Zealand.

Some examples: four weeks' paid leave, minimum wage to be a living wage, pay equity between women and men, abolition of youth rates, reduction in working hours with no loss of pay and increases in welfare benefits.

Bosses' control over paid employment is always undermining workers' struggles to improve their life.

That control would be loosened by a universal basic income.

By giving every citizen the right to a basic subsistence income, it would help to free workers from the constant fear of poverty if they lose their jobs.

(4) SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION

Nobody on the planet can be free until everyone is free.

Today the peoples of Palestine, Iraq, Aceh, West Papua, Kurdistan, Tibet and other occupied regions are fighting for national freedom.

Colonising states like Israel, America, Indonesia, Turkey and China are using military force against these liberation movements.

Their struggles for self-determination deserve our full support.

There is a historical similarity to the British state's colonisation of Aotearoa. So supporting self-determination for overseas peoples goes hand-in-hand with support for tino rangatiratanga here in New Zealand.

150 years of struggles around justice for Maori are now resulting in treaty settlements where the government apologises for past misdeeds and makes partial compensation.

Often the focus then shifts to who will control the settlement assets: flaxroots Maori or the Browntable, an emerging class of Maori capitalists.

This conflict is linking the struggle for tino rangatiratanga with the fight for workers' rights.

New Zealand laws favour the Browntable by giving absolute control of Maori assets to a handful of trustees.

We support Maori struggles to place trusts under the democratic control of their iwi or hapu.

(5) PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS

The US 'war on terrorism' is the excuse for an attack on civil liberties in most Western countries.

Bush's homeland security law allows military tribunals in America to order executions based on a much lower standard of evidence than required in civil courts.

Here in New Zealand, the Labour government has allowed state spies to snoop into our computers and use secret evidence to label someone a 'terrorist'.

The racist campaign against 'Islamic terrorism' has

fueled calls for tighter immigration laws.

Capitalism creates vast numbers of economic migrants by plundering the planet. Yet the rights of labour to migrate are being restricted at the same time as capital is allowed to move more freely around the globe.

We need to reverse all these trends. Our stand must be: Defend civil liberties. Nobody is illegal. Everyone should be free.

Human rights should be extended into areas like the right to shelter, the abolition of child poverty and the right to control your own body.

(6) DEFEND PUBLIC SERVICES

Armed globalisation goes hand-in-hand with the privatisation of public services.

In Iraq, the first move of the US governor was to privatise oil, water and other public assets, all the while turning a blind eye to the suffering of ordinary Iraqis.

In New Zealand, the privatisation of public assets fed into a general fall in working class living standards.

Privatisation benefits only a coalition of politicians, bankers and bosses. It shows the conflict between private profit and the public good.

Now we face the GATS scheme to privatise services like health, education and water.

Helen Clark's government has signed onto this World Trade Organisation push to increase the wealth and power of the planet's rulers.

While Labour ministers say they have written 'safeguards' into the local GATS deal, these will at best only slow the pace of privatisation.

We must oppose GATS and other privatisation schemes, such as corporates forming 'partnerships' with the state to control public assets.

The public good demands the renationalisation of commercialised industries, like power, Telecom and Bank of New Zealand.

The government should be injecting more cash into health and education, funded by higher taxes on the rich.

The extension of democratic social ownership calls for workers' unions and community groups to be at the centre of running public services.

(7) CLEAN UP THE ENVIRONMENT

Along with the increasing prospect of major wars, environmental devastation is the most serious threat to humanity and our planet.

Unrestricted capitalism always puts competition for profits ahead of protection of the environment.

Often the 'protection' measures of governments are words rather than deeds.

In New Zealand, the Labour government's pledge to oversee the 'managed release' of genetically engineered crops has turned into full backing for Washington's demand that the WTO force GE food onto an unwilling Europe.

The United Nations is flagging the possibility of environmental catastrophe from global warming.

While the New Zealand government has signed up to the Kyoto protocol, its concrete steps to enforce reductions in greenhouse gases lag well behind what's needed.

More motorways are being funded by Labour politicians which will increase greenhouse gas emissions.

We must call for big public investment in cheap public transport and renewable energy sources.

Contact your local peace & justice forum

AUCKLAND

John Minto 846 3173, jbmin-to@xtra.co.nz

Mike Treen 021-2547 440, miket@pl.net

webpage: www.gpja.pl.net

Forums 7.30pm first Monday of each month at Trade Union Centre, 147 Great North Rd, Grey Lynn.

WELLINGTON

Peace & Environment Centre
382 8129

peacewellington@hotmail.com
Meetings every Monday. Ring or email for details.

CHRISTCHURCH

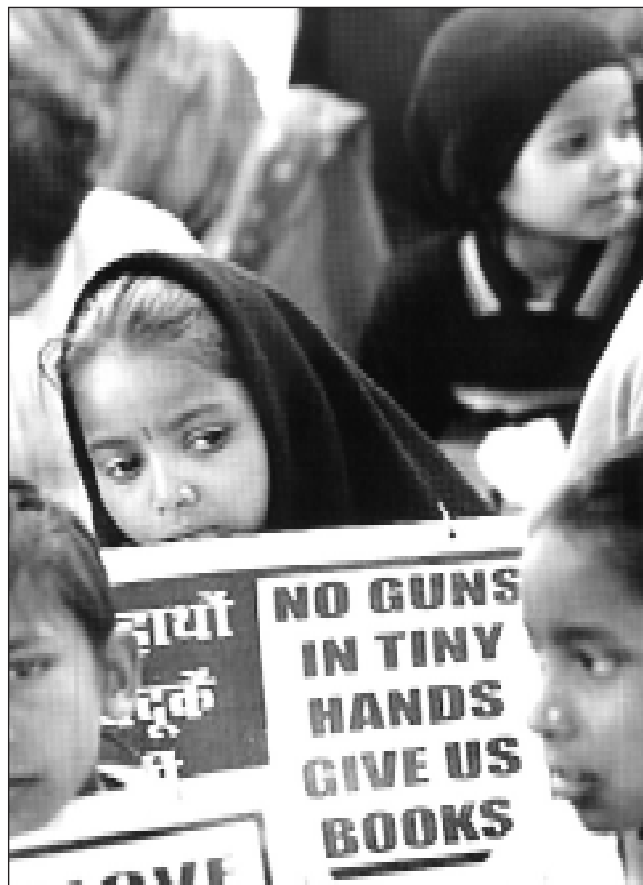
Heather 981 2825

peaceotautahi@yahoo.co.nz

Webpage:

<http://peaceaction.net.nz/>

There are regular meetings. Ring or email for details.



Indian school students give capitalist politicians a message they don't want to hear



WHERE WE STAND

SOCIALISM

Capitalism is a system of exploitation which generates inequality, crisis and war. Although workers create society's wealth, it is controlled by the ruling class for its own selfish ends.

Socialism can only be built when the working class takes control of social wealth and democratically plans its production and distribution to meet human needs, not private profits. This will eliminate all class divisions in society.

Stalinist countries such as China and Cuba, just like the former Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc, have nothing to do with socialism. They are state capitalist. We support the struggles of workers against every dictatorial Stalinist ruling class.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORMISM

The present system cannot be reformed to end exploitation and oppression, contrary to what Green, Labour and union leaders claim. It must be overthrown by the working class.

Capitalism's parliament, army, police and judiciary protect the ruling class. These institutions cannot be taken over and used by the working class.

To pave the way to socialism the working class needs a new kind of state—a democratic workers' state based on workers' councils and workers' militia.

INTERNATIONALISM

Workers in every country are exploited by capitalism, so the struggle for socialism is global.

We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We fight racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support all genuine national liberation struggles.

We are internationalists because socialism depends on spreading working class revolutions around the world.

LIBERATION FROM OPPRESSION

We fight for democratic rights. We oppose the oppression of women, Maori, Pacific Peoples, immigrants and refugees, lesbians and gays.

All forms of oppression are used to divide the working class.

We support the right of all oppressed groups to organise for their own defence. Their liberation is essential to socialist revolution and impossible without it.

TINO RANGATIRATANGA

We support the struggle for Maori self determination.

The government's approach to Treaty claims has benefited a Maori elite while doing little for working class Maori.

Tino rangatiratanga cannot be achieved within capitalism. It will only become a reality with the establishment of a workers' state.

REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a mass revolutionary socialist party.

We are in the early stages of building such a party through involvement in the day-to-day struggles of workers and the oppressed.

Socialist Worker must grow in size and influence to provide leadership in the struggle for working class self-emancipation.

We need to revitalise the unions with a rank-and-file movement.

If you like our ideas and want to fight for socialism, then join us.

How to contact Socialist Worker

Vaughan (09) 433 8897, vaughang@ihug.co.nz

★ AUCKLAND

Meets 7.30pm each Tuesday at Trade Union Centre, 147 Great North Rd, Grey Lynn.
Socialist Centre 634 3984, gcm@actrix.gen.nz

★ HAMILTON

Anna 847 6303, queenoffrankton@hotmail.com

★ TAURANGA

Tony 544 1859, hatosnell@hotmail.com

★ ROTORUA

Bernie 345 9853, bernieh@clear.net.nz

★ WELLINGTON

Grant 566 9171, grant_brookes@paradise.net.nz
Meets 7pm each Thursday at Room 2, Crossways (upstairs – use back/ side entrance), Elizabeth St, Mt Victoria.

★ GREYMOUTH

Kyle (03) 762 6055, kyle_webster@hotmail.com

★ CHRISTCHURCH

Don 385 5268, dwa@netaccess.co.nz

★ TIMARU

Vaughan 686 6498

★ NATIONAL OFFICE

Contact Socialist Worker members elsewhere in NZ and our sister organisations overseas through our national office: (09) 634 3984, PO Box 13-685 Auckland, gcm@actrix.gen.nz
Website: http://au.geocities.com/swo_nz/

So you're seriously interested in Socialist Worker? Send us this form:

NAME.....

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EMAIL.....

PHONE.....

Post to Socialist Worker, Box 13-685, Auckland. Or email gcm@actrix.gen.nz